



PRESS RELEASE

16-003(c)

Date: Tuesday, January 12, 2016 (1700)
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ROUTE 243 BOULDER REMOVAL – BROKEN EQUIPMENT HALTS OPERATION

RIVERSIDE- Caltrans District 8 continued work today removing a 40-50 ton boulder that fell onto State Route 243 (SR 243) between Pine Cove and Idyllwild, which closed the route completely on Sunday at approximately 10:00 p.m. Yesterday, Caltrans rented a specially fabricated excavator equipped with a “Stinger”, or hydraulic breaker, which arrived on scene late last night.

Work began this morning with the excavator to break apart the boulder and continued throughout the day. However, this afternoon the fabricated part attached to the excavator broke and halted the removal operation. Approximately 50% of the boulder remains on the highway and still needs to be broken apart before it can be removed.

Maintenance crews brought in additional Caltrans equipment and attempted to push the remains of the boulder to the shoulder. But the boulder pieces were still too large and heavy to move.

Therefore, **SR 243 will remain closed until further notice** pending the removal of the boulder and repairs to the damaged pavement.

The attachment for hydraulic breaker was modified to fit onto the excavator and is not readily available. It has been ordered and expected to be delivered to the jobsite tomorrow morning. Repairs will be made to the equipment and work will resume to break apart the remainder of the boulder. Once the boulder and debris have been removed, temporary asphalt repairs will take place where the boulder fell onto the pavement.

Updates on the work and closure status will be released when available. Caltrans thanks the public, residents, partner agencies, and businesses for their understanding and patience for this unforeseen event.

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